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The Cooperative Extension System

Investing in America's Future



**United States Department of Agriculture
Extension Service
and Land Grant University
Cooperative Extension Services**

Program Aid
No. 1412



Cooperative

*A nationwide network of educators who
serve in the national interest.*



Extension

*Extending research-based knowledge and
technology from the laboratory to the
community.*



System

*A unique educational system that draws
on the expertise of federal, state, and
local partners.*

This program aid supersedes PA-1302, "The Cooperative Extension
Service - A Nationwide Knowledge System" revised May 1984.

Revised February 1989



The Cooperative Extension System

Investing in America's Future

The Cooperative Extension System, a national educational network, links research, science, and technology to the needs of people where they live and work. Extension's purpose is education—practical education for Americans to use in dealing with the critical issues that impact their daily lives and the Nation's future.

Extension education combines the expertise and resources of federal, state, and local governments. The partners in this unique System are:

- The Extension Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Extension professionals at land-grant universities throughout the United States and its territories.
- Extension professionals in nearly all of the Nation's 3,150 counties.

Thousands of paraprofessionals and nearly 3 million volunteers support this partnership and magnify its impact. Strong linkages with both public and private external groups are also crucial to the Extension System's strength and vitality.

The future of America depends, in part, on how well prepared people are to face critical issues. Extension's new agenda targets issues that address social, economic, and environmental concerns of people.

The Extension System recently identified nine national initiatives to provide a new focus for its educational efforts.

These first national initiatives are:

- Alternative Agricultural Opportunities
- Building Human Capital
- Competitiveness and Profitability of American Agriculture
- Conservation and Management of Natural Resources
- Family and Economic Well-Being
- Improving Nutrition, Diet and Health
- Revitalizing Rural America
- Water Quality
- Youth at Risk

Nationwide Extension professionals in agriculture, natural resources, home economics, human nutrition, rural and community development, and 4-H and youth programs focus their educational programs on these initiatives.

Alternative Agricultural Opportunities



Extension programs help farmers, ranchers, and others use a distinctive approach to alternative crop and livestock enterprises. Rather than base decisions primarily on production capabilities, successful alternative agriculturalists integrate marketing, management, and production factors into a total business plan. Alternative agricultural opportunities are evaluated, and those which are most successful are adopted.

Maintaining profitability while protecting the environment is an underlying concern that must be addressed as new enterprises are explored and nonfarm employment options assessed.

Building Human Capital



America's strength rests on the capabilities of its people. Developing this human capital is one of Extension's greatest responsibilities. Extension programs offer adults and youth opportunities to reach their full potential at home, in society, and in the workplace. Extension works with people to help them:

- Develop marketable job skills, make informed career decisions, and expand available opportunities.
- Acquire better decisionmaking and leadership skills as effective volunteers.

Recruiting youth into the food and agricultural sciences is important. Young people are America's future agricultural producers, scientists, and business leaders.

Competitiveness and Profitability of American Agriculture



Extension uses its research-based information to help retain America's competitive edge in world markets by increasing profitability throughout the food and fiber system.

Extension's strategic plan for enhancing competitiveness and profitability enables farmers to:

- Improve economic efficiency by integrating production, finances, and management skills.
- Develop, apply, and transfer technology.
- Balance human health, nutrition, and environmental concerns with profitability goals.
- Adjust profitability to global market changes and realities.
- Strengthen business and support systems.

Conservation and Management of Natural Resources



Environmentally sound management practices are the key to preserving renewable natural resources and profiting from our resources. When managed properly, resources like soil, water, rangeland, forests, and wildlife are the mainstays of a rural area's economy and environment. Extension teaches landowners conservation and management of natural resources to ensure their profitability and preservation.

Through Extension education about natural resources, people learn how to:

- Benefit from natural ecosystems without destroying them.
- Sustain a productive natural resource base.
- Market natural resource goods and services.
- Formulate and implement sound public policies.

Family and Economic Well-Being



The rapid, sometimes severe, changes in society, technology, and economics occurring in America create the need for research-based Extension programs to improve the well-being of our families. Youth and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to these changes.

Extension programs, often in cooperation with other community and private organizations, teach family members to:

- Analyze and manage family finances and make sound decisions about housing, retirement planning, and health care.
- Confront and deal with problems of alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, inadequate child care, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and underachievement.
- Identify and develop coping skills and community support systems.
- Understand the aging process and develop strategies and resources for the retirement years.

Improving Nutrition, Diet and Health



The need for improving nutrition, diet, and health in the United States offers unparalleled opportunity for Extension staff and programs. More and more, diet is targeted as a possible risk factor in health problems. At the same time, the economic success of the food industry and the nutritional quality and safety of food are becoming increasingly intertwined.

Extension education offers reliable, unbiased information about the relationship of dietary practices to lifestyle factors and health.

The safety, quality, and composition of food is a major concern of both the food industry and consumers. Extension targets programs to the specific needs of both groups.

In addition, Extension helps the food industry better understand its consumers through educational programs on consumer needs and perceptions.

Revitalizing Rural America



The revitalization of our rural areas is not only in the best interest of the 63 million people living there but is also in the best interest of the entire Nation. Rural America is responsible for the production of food, fiber, and forest products with stewardship of almost 90 percent of the country's land and water resource base.

In cooperation with local governments and other organizations, Extension education programs address the full potential of rural areas by emphasizing how to:

- Increase the competitiveness and efficiency of existing enterprises.
- Explore methods to diversify local economies and attract new industries and employers.
- Adjust to impacts of change on local communities and government.
- Develop new ways to finance and deliver local services.
- Train skilled community leaders to build networks and make sound public policy decisions.



Our water supply is one of our most valuable resources. The potential for contamination is a threat to the health and well-being of all Americans. Extension programs help people understand the causes and effects of water pollution and work to achieve an atmosphere of cooperation between varied interests in the water quality area.

Extension works with consumers, producers, and local government officials to learn more about:

- Importance of high-quality groundwater and the relationship between health and drinking water.
- Conservation and wise use of water resources.

Extension also works with chemical users and policymakers on the effects of agricultural chemicals and contaminants on water quality and the need for sound public policy to protect the quality of community water resources.



America faces a youth crisis that crosses social, cultural, and economic barriers. Disturbing statistics and trends reveal poverty, poor nutrition, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, and suicide increasing among young people. Existing education, health, and child care approaches are not meeting the challenge.

All youth are at risk. Many of the most vulnerable may not develop into healthy, productive adulthood. The Cooperative Extension System is committed to helping lead the drive to assist youth at risk. It will:

- Expand the youth outreach mission and resources of the total land-grant university system to meet the needs of all youth at risk.
- Develop and deliver programs for the most susceptible youth that build strengths and treat causes rather than symptoms.
- Provide leadership and job skills training for America's future leaders and workers.
- Train youth professionals and volunteers to work with young people, families, neighborhoods, and the larger community to prevent and treat problems.

The Cooperative Extension System is positioned for the 21st Century as a dynamic change agent and national educational network.

By incorporating a strategic planning process and a systems method to program development, delivery, and evaluation through issues programming, Extension will continue to identify and address the critical concerns of Americans.

Communications and electronic technology are also crucial to Extension's future. Computer networks, electronic mail, satellite communications, and other emerging technologies already affect the way Extension delivers programs. Staffs nationwide will continue to use these and other applicable technologies to target audiences more efficiently and effectively.

Extension Is Close to You

Extension offices are conveniently located for most citizens. Offices are usually in courthouses, post offices, or other government buildings in the county. You may also write for information to the Director/Administrator of the State Extension Service located at the land-grant university listed.

Alabama	Auburn University, Auburn 36849 Alabama A&M University, Normal 35762 Tuskegee University, Tuskegee 36088
Alaska	University of Alaska, Fairbanks 99701
American Samoa	American Samoa Community College, Pago Pago 96799
Arizona	University of Arizona, Tucson 85721
Arkansas	University of Arkansas, Little Rock 72203 University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff 71601
California	University of California, Berkeley 94720
Colorado	Colorado State University, Fort Collins 80523
Connecticut	University of Connecticut, Storrs 06268
Delaware	University of Delaware, Newark 19717- 1303 Delaware State College, Dover 19901
District of Columbia	University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC 20008
Florida	University of Florida, Gainesville 32611 Florida A&M University, Tallahassee 32307
Georgia	University of Georgia, Athens 30602 The Fort Valley State College, Fort Valley 31030

Guam	University of Guam, Mangiloa 96913
Hawaii	University of Hawaii, Honolulu 96822
Idaho	University of Idaho, Moscow 83843
Illinois	University of Illinois, Urbana 61801
Indiana	Purdue University, West Lafayette 47907
Iowa	Iowa State University, Ames 50011
Kansas	Kansas State University, Manhattan 66506
Kentucky	University of Kentucky, Lexington 40546 Kentucky State University, Frankfort 40601
Louisiana	Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge 70803-1900 Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, 70813
Maine	University of Maine, Orono 04469
Maryland	The University of Maryland, College Park 20742 The University of Maryland, Eastern Shore 21853
Massachusetts	University of Massachusetts, Amherst 01003
Michigan	Michigan State University, East Lansing 44824
Micronesia	College of Micronesia, Ponape, E.C.I. 96941
Minnesota	University of Minnesota, St. Paul 55108
Mississippi	Mississippi State University, Mississippi State 39762 Alcorn State University, Lorman 39096



Missouri	University of Missouri, Columbia 65211 Lincoln University, Jefferson City 65101
Montana	Montana State University, Bozeman 59717
Nebraska	University of Nebraska, Lincoln 68583-0703
Nevada	University of Nevada, Reno 89557
New Hampshire	University of New Hampshire, Durham 03824
New Jersey	Rutgers State University, New Brunswick 08903
New Mexico	New Mexico State University, Las Cruces 88003
New York	New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca 14853
North Carolina	North Carolina State University, Raleigh 27695-7602 North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro 27420
North Dakota	North Dakota State University, Fargo 58105
Northern Marianas	Northern Marianas College, Saipan, C.M. 96950
Ohio	The Ohio State University, Columbus 43210
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University, Stillwater 74078 Langston University, Langston 73050
Oregon	Oregon State University, Corvallis 97331
Pennsylvania	Penn State University, University Park 16802
Puerto Rico	University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez 00708

Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island, Kingston 02881
South Carolina	Clemson University, Clemson 29634 South Carolina State College, Orangeburg 29117
South Dakota	South Dakota State University, Brookings 57007
Tennessee	University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37901 Tennessee State University, Nashville 32709-1561
Texas	Texas A&M University, College Station 77843 Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View 77445
Utah	Utah State University, Logan 84322-4900
Vermont	University of Vermont, Burlington 05405
Virginia	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg 24061 Virginia State University, Petersburg 23803
Virgin Islands	University of the Virgin Islands, St. Croix 00850
Washington	Washington State University, Pullman 99164-6230
West Virginia	West Virginia University, Morgantown 26506
Wisconsin	University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706
Wyoming	University of Wyoming, Laramie 82071

For information on Extension at the national and international level, write to the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-0900.

The Cooperative Extension System celebrates its 75th anniversary in 1989.

Established in 1914, Cooperative Extension was designed as a partnership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the land-grant universities, which were authorized by the Federal Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890.

Legislation in the various states has enabled local governments or organized groups in the Nation's counties to become a third legal partner in this educational endeavor. The congressional charge to Cooperative Extension through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 is far ranging:

"...to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information. . .extension work shall consist of the development of practical applications of research knowledge and giving of instruction and practical demonstrations of improved practices on technologies. . . ."

Today, this educational system includes professionals in each of America's 1862 land-grant universities (in the 50 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Marianas, American Samoa, Micronesia, and the District of Columbia) and in the Tuskegee University and 16 1890 land-grant universities.

The Cooperative Extension System's programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, religion, age, or national origin.

